

Peter Taylor Chapel (Carrs Methodist Church)
South side of Kentucky State Route 8
Vanceburg Vicinity
Lewis County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-167

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4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PETER TAYLOR CHAPEL (Carrs Methodist Church)

HABS NO. KY-167

Location: Kentucky
Lewis County
vicinity Vanceburg
located on KY State Route 8 between Vanceburg
and Concord
17th Congressional District

Present Owner: Kentucky Power Company
1701 Central Avenue
Ashland, Kentucky
41101

Present Occupant: vacant; cemetery relocated in 1980 or 1981.

Present Use: vacant; considered for demolition in Kentucky
Power Company's plans for a new power plant on
this site.

Significance: The Peter Taylor Chapel is a small church of
a form traditional to rural areas across the
county over a period of two centuries. The
simple form with its single room housed under a
gable roof with gable end facade is perhaps
the most common form for small churches seen
in rural communities. The altar is located at
the far end of the church, directly opposite the
front entrance. The altar is denoted on the
exterior by a three-sided bay. Attenuated windows
are found along the long sides of the building,
emphasizing its ecclesiastical function. The use
of decorative corbelling is considered to be
unique within the county.

Organized by the leading families in this area
in 1877 and built in 1878, the church symbolizes
the coalescence of a community along this
stretch of the Ohio River. The chapel was
affiliated historically with the Methodist
Episcopal Church, South. Its construction in
1878 and religious affiliation, as well as its
architectural character, reflect both the period
of prosperity, which underlay the community's
development, and its conservative, Southern
orientation, which was true in general of the
Ohio River valley in the mid-nineteenth century.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1878 (date stone in gable end of facade). This is consistent with documents belonging to the church and the deed to the land.
2. Architect: unknown
3. Commissioned by: (Peter Taylor)
4. Original and subsequent owners: This partial chain of title begins with acquisition of the land from the Bierly family. Deeds are housed at the Clerk's Office, Lewis County Courthouse, Vanceburg; complete chain of title was provided by Kentucky Power Company, Ashland, Kentucky.

1878 Deed September 20, 1878, recorded October 16, 1878
in Volume X, Page 2
Charles W. Bierly and Catherine Bierly, his wife,
and John C. Bierly and Lena Bierly, his wife
To
J. R. Garland, Thomas J. Bruce and F. M. Carr as
Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

1980 Deed July 8, 1980, recorded July 17, 1980
in Volume 137, Page 36
The Board of Trustees of the Kentucky Annual
Conference of the United Methodist Church
To
Franklin Real Estate Company

1982 Deed October 18, 1982, recorded October 19, 1982
in Volume 140, Page 533
Franklin Real Estate Company
To
Kentucky Power Company

5. Original plans and construction: Of brick construction, the church was originally planned as a rectangular building with a single room accessible through the door at the north elevation (gable end facade). The bricks are said to have been made locally, and the cut stone is believed to have been brought from Buena Vista, Ohio, across the river from Vanceburg.
6. Alterations and additions: A large rectangular wing containing a single room was added in 1963 or 1964. The wing is set back from the facade, and extends west from the rear twenty feet of the west elevation. The interior was remodelled in 1961 with the original details removed and the small closets added at the front of the building to either side of the vestibule.

B. Historical Context:

Originally known as Stout's Bottom after the Stout family, which owned most of the land in this area in the early nineteenth century, the community became known as Carrs or Carrs Landing after Frederick Carr, who had moved into the area in the early 1860s and became a leading citizen in the middle to late nineteenth century. Although Lewis County is considered part of eastern Kentucky, it lacks the mineral resources for which this region is known. The county is hilly and historically depressed, except for the rich valleys of the Ohio River, Kinniconick and Cabin Creeks. In the 1870s, the principal products were corn, wheat, rye, oats, horses, cattle and hogs. After the Civil War, cultivation of tobacco began to spread beyond the Bluegrass. Twenty-five hundred pounds of tobacco appear among Carr's taxable wealth, signifying the introduction of the crop to this area after the war. As a result of the extension of the railroad, tobacco cultivation and increased river traffic, a small community began to flourish. Organization of a Methodist Sunday School in September 1877 and the subsequent construction of a church reflects the demographic growth that accompanied prosperity in this area and provided a focus for the community.

By 1881, the community included three substantial farmhouses, which faced the river and which have since been included in the National Register of Historic Places. These are the Walter Dickerson House, built in 1844; the Thomas J. Bruce House; and the Fred Carr House. In addition to these houses, there were a store, post office, school, church and the landings along the Ohio. Carr ran the post office and store; the first depot was later built behind his house.

The Carr and Bruce families had owned slaves prior to and during the Civil War, although slaves represented merely 2.8 percent of the county's population in contrast to the state statistic of 19.5 percent. The Ohio River valley was known to have been a region sympathetic to the Confederacy. Although Kentucky remained within the Union after 1861, it is not surprising that Bruce and Carr helped organize a church that was affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In 1878, John Bierly and his wife sold the real estate for the chapel to the Trustees for a nominal sum. When their first brick and frame house was washed out in the flood of 1884, the family took refuge in the chapel. Bierly

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subsequently built the present brick house, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Bierly is also said to have brought the bell for the chapel back from Cincinnati.

The depot, store and post office were subsequently moved to a location behind the Bierly House after the railroad track was widened. Maps from 1925 and 1937 show the church, school, post office, depot and store clustered in the vicinity of the intersection of Carrs Lane and the present State Route 8, where Carrs Lane crosses the railroad and runs from the depot north across the road to the river, where there had been a landing.

The Sunday School records begin in September 1877, a full year prior to the purchase of the lot and more than ten years before the first minister, E. G. B. Mann, was appointed in 1889. Since gathering a Sunday School class did not require the presence of an ordained minister, the community apparently began to worship collectively before building a church and finding a preacher. After it was organized on a more formal basis, ministers served one-year terms, typically accomodating a number of congregations in their circuits. The minister preached at the Peter Taylor Chapel about once a month.

Why the chapel was named for Peter Taylor is unknown, although there are several local traditions. One version, told by Mr. Walter Dickerson, who owns an 1844 brick farmhouse next to the Bruce (Cook) House, describes Taylor as a local landowner and minister. According to Dickerson, Taylor officiated at his parent's marriage. A Peter Taylor, who died between 1870 and 1877, did own 242 acres on the Ohio River near this area. Another version, provided by Mrs. Peggy McCann, who used to live near the depot in Carrs, describes Taylor as a reformed alcoholic who made the bricks on the river bank and built the chapel himself. Mrs. McCann obtained her information from Samuel E. and Bessie L. Bierly, the son and daughter-in-law of John Bierly, who lived in the Fred Carr House after Carr died, and who worshipped at the Taylor Chapel. Finally, Miss Maude Bierly, Samuel Bierly's sister who presently owns and occupies the John Bierly House, remembers that a man from Maysville or Augusta built the chapel and named it for his friend Peter Taylor, who was a minister or "church man" of some sort.

The church continued to function well into the twentieth century. The Sunday School room was added in 1963 or 1964 and the interior was renovated. Two weddings were held in it in 1980. It has since been closed; the furnishings divided among neighboring congregations, and the cemetery relocated.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Maps:

- 1925 Geological map of Lewis County, Kentucky. Surveyed by E. S. Perry. Kentucky Geological Survey, Frankfort, Kentucky. Scale: 1":1 mile.
- 1937 Traffic flow map, Lewis County, Kentucky. Prepared by the Kentucky Department of Highways in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads. Scale: 1":1 1/2 miles.

2. Unpublished and published sources:

Bowman, Mary Jean and W. Warren Haynes

- 1963 Resources and people of east Kentucky; problems and potentials of a lagging economy. Resources for the Future by Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Collins, Richard and Lewis Collins

- 1882 History of Kentucky. 2 vols. Collins & Co., Covington, Kentucky.

Eastern Kentucky.

1865 n.p., n.p.

Hathaway, Beverly West

- 1974 Inventory of county records of Kentucky. Accelerated Indexing System Inc., Bountiful, Utah.

Larrance, Isaac

- 1880 Post office key, or Kentucky map by figures with a key to space. Isaac Larrance, Plainville, Ohio.

Mead, H.E.

- 1867 Kentucky and Tennessee; a complete guide to their railroad stations and their distances, connections north and south. Their rivers, their landings and distances. H. E. Mead, Louisville, Kentucky.

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Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Peter Taylor Chapel
n.d. Register. Manuscript in possession of Mrs. Inez
Barnhardt, Vanceburg, Kentucky.

n.d. Sunday School Book. Manuscript in possession of
Mrs. Inez Barnhardt, Vanceburg, Kentucky.

National Register of Historic Places

1978 National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Form: Historic Resources of Carrs River Community,
Lewis County, Kentucky. Compiled by Claudia
Lynn Watson, Soil Systems, Inc. On file at the
National Register of Historic Places, Washington,
D.C.

Piatt, G. Sam

1979 Power plant will replace former way of life. Ashland
(KY) Daily Independent, February 25, 1979.
Copy of article supplied by Kentucky Power Company,
Ashland, Kentucky.

Kentucky, State of

1842-Tax lists, Lewis County (manuscript). Microfilm of
1875 originals on file at the Lewis County Public
Library, Vanceburg, Kentucky.

Talley, William M.

1971 Talley's northeastern Kentucky papers. American
Reference Publishers, Fort Worth, Texas.

University of Kentucky, Works Projects Administration

1939 Kentucky; a guide to the bluegrass state. Harcourt,
Brace and Company, New York.

U.S., Bureau of Census

1860 Population schedules of the Eighth Census of the
United States: 1860; Kentucky, Lewis County,
Free Inhabitants. Microfilm of original on file
at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

1860 Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the
United States: 1860, Kentucky, Lewis County, Slave
Schedules. Microfilm of original on file at the
National Archives, Washington, D.C.

1870 Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the
United States: 1870, Kentucky, Lewis County, Vol. 20,
Vanceburg Precinct. Microfilm of original on
file at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

1880 Population Schedules of the Tenth Census of the United
States: 1880, Kentucky, Vol. 19, Lewis County,
Vanceburg Precinct. Microfilm of original on file at
the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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1900 Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900.
Schedule No. 1. Population, Kentucky, Lewis
County, Martins Precinct. Microfilm of original
on file at the National Archives, Washington,
D.C.

1910 Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910.
Schedule No. 1. Population, Kentucky, Lewis
County, Magisterial District No. 2, Martins Voting
District. Microfilm of original on file at the
National Archives, Washington, D.C.

3. Materials provided by Kentucky Power Company, Ashland, Kentucky:

Gray, Woods & Cooper

1977 Abstract of Title and Final Title Certificate,
Option #3 Thomas J. Bruce (Hazel Cook) House

1977 Abstract of title and Preliminary Title Certificate.
Option #9 (John Bierly (Maude Bierly) House)

1977 Abstract of Title and Preliminary Certificate
of Title, Option #10 (Fred Carr House).

1978 Continuation of Abstract of Title and Final
Title Certificate, Option #6.

1978 Abstract of Title and Preliminary Title Certificate,
Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

4. Oral History Interviews:

Dickerson, Walter. Recollections of the Carrs Community.
Lewis County, Kentucky, Historic Documentation (492-20055).
March 1, 1983. Interviewed by Amy Friedlander and
Roger Wheeler. Tape and transcript on file at Soil
Systems, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia.

Bierly, Maude and Helen Kimble. Recollections of the
Carrs Community. Lewis County, Kentucky, Historic
Documentation (492-20055). March 2, 1983. Interviewed
by Amy Friedlander and Roger Wheeler. Tape and transcript
on file at Soil Systems, Inc. Alexandria, Virginia.

Barnhardt, Inez. Recollections of the Peter Taylor
Chapel and the Carrs Community. Lewis County, Kentucky,
Historic Documentation (492-20055). March 2, 1983.
Interviewed by Amy Friedlander and Roger Wheeler. Notes
on file at Soil Systems, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia.

McCann, Peggy. Recollections of Peter Taylor Chapel and the Carrs Community. Lewis County, Kentucky, Historic Documentation (492-20055). March 2, 1983. Interviewed by Amy Friedlander and Roger Wheeler. Tape and transcript on file at Soil Systems, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The simple rectangular form and gable end orientation of the original plan is typical of a long and widespread tradition of small rural churches. Italianate elements applied to the vernacular form include a bracketed pediment over the door, engaged pilasters of brick framing the bays, and an unusual raking corbel cornice on the gable ends.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition with no significant signs of deterioration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original core of the building has basal dimensions of 25' x 45'. The west wing has basal dimensions of 20' x 32'.
2. Foundations: The building is supported by brick foundations.
3. Walls: The walls are of brick laid in common bond and are approximately 15' high at the exterior sides, higher at the gable ends. Engaged pilasters resting on a watertable base and terminated by a corbel cornice, frame recessed panels with one bay each. The west wing has no decorative wall treatment with the brick laid in common bond.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick construction with 1' thick exterior walls; pilasters are decorative.
5. Stoops: There is a single stoop at the center of the facade. The stoop consists of four poured concrete steps the width of the two leaf door.
6. Chimneys: There is a small aluminum vent near the cupola at the roof peak near the facade. The vent serves the furnace installed in one of the service closets near the entrance.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are two doors; the principal door being the single and central bay of the gable end facade of the original core. The second door is located slightly off-center of the facade elevation of the west wing, between two windows. The principal door has two leaves with six recessed panels each. There is a six light transom with a slightly projecting pedimented hood supported by sawn wood brackets. The secondary door has six panels and a simple frame with a cut stone lintel.
- b. Windows: Windows have six-over-six panes each; those on the main block are larger and more attenuated. The windows on the main block have stone sills and lintels; those on the west wing have stone lintels only. There is no evidence of shutter hardware on the simple surrounds. The three-sided bay at the rear gable end of the original core has two windows, each with four-over-four panes. There are three windows at the east elevation (this arrangement was duplicated on the original west elevation). The wing has two windows at each of the north and south elevations.
- c. Datestone: In the peak of the gable end facade is a datestone with the inscription "Peter Taylor Chapel, M.E.C.S., 1878". The circular stone surrounds a small ventilator of wood. At the top of the datestone is a crown-and-cross motif characteristic of Methodist symbolism of the time.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with standing seam metal roofing on the original section; the addition has asphalt composition shingles.
- b. Cornice eaves: The eaves extend slightly past the exterior walls. The cornice is of corbelled brick and rakes on the gable ends of the main section. There is no cornice on the west addition.
- c. Cupola: There is a single cupola at the peak of the gable roof above the front door. The cupola is of frame with weatherboard and ventilator panels. It has four sides and is topped with a pyramidal roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: (Refer to Sketch)
 - a. Principal Floor: The church has only one floor, raised slightly above ground level. There are two principal rooms: one for the original core, one for the west wing addition. The principal and larger room is located in the original section. It features a small vestibule with two closets, one for clothing, the other for utilities. The altar is raised about nine inches and is situated at the southern portion of the principal room. It includes the three-sided bay with its two small windows. The secondary room is without internal partitions.
2. Flooring: Replacement flooring consists of oak boards lightly finished.
3. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Walls are of plaster and feature 3' high knotty pine wainscoting. The walls are 14' in height. The ceiling is covered with acoustical tile which is dropped several inches from the original plaster ceiling. A modern ogee molded strip of wood supports the acoustical tile at the wall perimeter.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A doorway extends from the west wall of the original church into the west addition. This doorway is vertical expansion of the original window bay. The vestibule has a two leaf door opposite the exterior door. It is later in date, representing the remodelling of 1961. Two small doors allow access to the two small closets in the vestibule. Like the inner vestibule doors, they date to 1961 and are simple plywood doors with no decorative detailing.
 - b. Windows: Windows are simply treated with plain light stained surrounds of narrow width.
5. Decorative Features and Trim: The 1961 remodelling resulted in the removal of all original interior decorative features and trim. The 1960s modern style trim is simple in form and decoration. The light stained woods are simply molded. The pews have been recently removed from the church and no church furniture remains.

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6. Hardware: Hardware consists only of that found on the doors. The interior and exterior hardware dates to the 1961 remodelling and is of simple design. The door knobs and hinges are of brass-plated metal.
7. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating: The church has hot air heat with small registers located along the walls (added 1961). The heater is housed in the utility closet located in the vestibule area.
 - b. Lighting: Natural light is the primary source of illumination with bare light bulbs suspended from the ceiling of the vestibule and in the closets.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The church is set back about 40' feet from Kentucky State Rte. 8. The facade faces the Ohio River and Ohio to the north. The land across the road is cultivated and slopes gently toward the Ohio River. The church is situated in a river valley formed by two ranges of hills on the Kentucky and Ohio sides of the Ohio River.
2. Historic landscape design: With the removal of the cemetery and other alterations of earlier date, little remains on the church property to suggest its historic landscape design. A board fence and outhouse to the rear of the property are primary features; neither is contemporary with the original design. The setting, however, is of historic significance. A dirt land extending along the east property boundary continues on the other side of Rte. 8 to the site of the former Carrs River Landing. The road is lined with an old growth of hedge. No plantings other than the grass lawn are found on the present church property.
3. Outbuildings: There is a single outbuilding located at the southwest corner of the property concealed from Rte. 8 behind the west addition to the church. The outhouse is of frame construction, clad in vertical board and features a shed roof and single door.

PART III: PROJECT INFORMATION

Federal Agency Involved: Environmental Protection Agency
The American Electric Power Service Corporation (Canton, Ohio),
through the Kentucky Power Company (Ashland, Kentucky) requested

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this documentation. They have proposed a power plant to be constructed on the site, which would impact the Thomas J. Bruce House (Hazel Cook), the John Bierly (Maude Bierly) House, the Fred Carr House, and the Peter Taylor Chapel. The architectural and photographic components of this project were conducted in May 1982 with Elizabeth W. Anderson as Project Manager and Robert A. Warnock as Architectural Historian. Historical documentation, including oral history interviews and archival research and preparation of the final document were completed during March 1983 with Charles H. LeeDecker as Project Manager and Amy Friedlander as Historian. Messrs. Russ Coburn and Roger Wheeler of Kentucky Power Company and Messrs. Frank Ferraro and Thomas Webb of American Electric Power Service Corporation were liasons for this project.

